

# Contributions to Education

by

Colonel Bradley Dewey

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*Colonel Bradley Dewey received the Chemical Industry Medal at a joint meeting of the American Section of the Society of Chemical Industry, the New York Section of the American Chemical Society, and the New York Section of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, held at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York November 10. The medalist's accomplishments in many fields were discussed by Karl T. Compton and Vannevar Bush.*

I FEEL almost like "the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition" in appearing here to discuss Bradley Dewey's contributions in the field of education, for I recognize that the honor which is today bestowed upon Colonel Dewey is primarily for his accomplishments as a chemist, chemical engineer, and industrialist, and that, in particular, this honor is in recognition of the outstanding national service which he performed as Rubber Director.

However, I am reminded of a very fine citizen who, in his college days on the football field, turned defeat into victory by picking up a fumble and making a sensational run for a touchdown. There are many points to this analogy. We were in 1942 faced with danger of defeat through the cutting off of our rubber supply. There had been a considerable amount of fumbling, and Bradley Dewey did pick up the ball and make a brilliant run to win the game. But that heroic football player was forever after known as the man who made the brilliant run. Splendid as Colonel Dewey's achievement has been in the rubber program, I hope that he will not go down in history for this alone, because his other accomplishments have been very important and, God willing, will be even more important in the future. It is my happy privilege to call attention to just one aspect of these—namely, his contributions to the field of education as I have had some opportunity to observe them.

In the first place I should remark that Bradley Dewey's interest in the field of education comes naturally, for his father, Professor Davis Rich Dewey, was a very distinguished, influential, and beloved member of the faculty of M.I.T. from 1886 until 1942, a span of 56 years, the last 9 of which were as professor emeritus. A distinguished economist, editor of the *American Economic Review* for over thirty years, Dr. Dewey was loved and respected by all M.I.T. alumni for his sound judgment, heart-warming smile, patience with engineering and science stu-

dents, willingness to listen sympathetically to new concepts of economics, and as a pioneer in the establishment of business and engineering administration as a training superimposed upon basic science and engineering.

Bradley Dewey has served on the Boards of Overseers at the Browne and Nichols School and at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge. He has been informally effective as an adviser in shaping some of the scientific courses at the Milton Academy, and his advice has been frequently sought with respect to educational affairs in his two alma maters, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

As past president of the Alumni Association, and a member of the Corporation of M.I.T. since 1932, Bradley Dewey has given very valuable assistance, especially as a member from time to time of visiting committees on the Departments of Chemistry, Mining and Metallurgy, Biology, Geology, and especially Chemical Engineering. He was in no small degree responsible for the introduction of electrochemistry for increased emphasis among the unit operations studied in our Department of Chemical Engineering. He was largely responsible for the instigation of plans for a much needed modern laboratory for the Chemical Engineering Department at M.I.T., and he was single-handedly responsible for initiating the arrangements which resulted in the actual construction of this laboratory for temporary use by the Chemical Warfare Service during the war, but destined to become the headquarters of the Chemical Engineering Department (which is incidentally the largest department at M.I.T.), just as soon as the war program can properly be discontinued.

Many other illustrations of Bradley Dewey's interest and usefulness in the educational field could be cited, and I should mention among them his great interest and help in the selection of able members for the staff.

I can properly close by quoting two extracts from letters by Bradley Dewey as chairman of the Visiting Committee of the Chemical Engineering Department to its head. In the first of these he points out that this department is admittedly doing one of the best jobs at the institute, but he goes on to say: "The burdens of leadership are great and the dangers of dry rot are ever present."

The second quotation is in his interestingly pungent form, as he says:

In writing this letter I am perfectly cognizant of the fact that you feel that your relationships with the administration are so harmonious and that you are being so well trained that you have no desire to use the committee as the grindstone to help sharpen any of your axes. However, I want to point out that, after the roasting that was given some visiting committees at the last corporation meeting, I personally have no intention of being a party to accepting the viewpoint that the visiting committee's interest should be confined to pictures pointed out or painted for them. But neither does this mean that the committee should propose to hear any criticism of the administration of the department from the staff. As I see it, its interest in talking to the staff is in order that the committee may form its own opinions as to probable future trends and, if possible, help you to foresee and guide these trends.

Again in his own words, Bradley Dewey "has tried to preach the value of applied science as well as so-called pure science" and is "convinced of the value of a technical education as training in how to think and how to approach the problems of everyday life".

Speaking as the head of an educational institution, I take this opportunity to say that an alumnus with the interest, judgment, ideals, and energy of a Bradley Dewey is an asset to any institution, and in this presence to express the indebtedness to Bradley Dewey of the several educational institutions with which he has had close contact, and their appreciation of his stimulating assistance.